

Robak, Bernard-Stevens, Bohlke, Byars, Moore, and Wesely. (Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 12. At that time, it was referred to the Health Committee. The bill was advanced to General File. There are committee amendments pending by the Health and Human Services Committee. (See AM0273 found on page 577 of the Legislative Journal, First Session.)

PRESIDENT ROBAK: The Chair recognizes Senator Wesely.

SENATOR WESELY: Thank you, Madam President and members of the Legislature. LB 291 is a bill that resulted from an interim study chaired by Senator Robak dealing with mental health and how we can improve the system. This particular bill will be followed by two more bills, all of which resulted from that study and will hopefully improve the mental health system in the State of Nebraska. The committee amendments deal with the issue of how we plan for the mental health services of the State of Nebraska, and currently there are two entities, a Mental Health Congress, and a Mental Health Advisory Committee, that provide for planning for mental health services. The idea is to merge the two and combine their planning process into one, and in so doing end any sort of duplication and fully involve the various individuals concerned about mental health services into the process, and have one not two of those processes. So the changes that we have in this bill increase the number from 24 to no larger than 34 members. That is the maximum number. Currently, there is like 36 people on the Mental Health Congress and 12 on the Advisory Committee, so even at 34, we would have fewer individuals involved. We do provide for broader representation. There should be an equal number of consumers and family members with others representing various interests in the mental health system. We include recognition in this of the various people that will be represented. We add to the list a housing and an education representative to the list already in the bill, and we also require that the council report its findings and recommendations to both the Legislature and the Governor each year. I think that's the main things that we have. We also require that consumer participation be one of the study points in the work of the council in the treatment planning process. So those are the committee amendments, and I'd be happy to answer questions. I move for their adoption.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Wesely, would you like to close? Waive closing. The question on the floor is the adoption of the committee amendments to LB 291.